

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method to detect and reward the return of shopping carts to the collection points ~~provided for them~~ at a shopping center, wherein during ~~the~~ a purchase, a first signal A is generated and when ~~the~~ a shopping cart is returned to a collection point, a second signal B is generated, and wherein the two signals A and B are correlated to issue a bonus, comprising;

assigning the first signal A to a certain customer by identifying or individualizing the customer by optical recognition; and

correlating the first signal A with the second signal B when generating the first signal A and/or by the customer carrying with him on an information medium the generated signal A until it is correlated with the second signal B.

2. (original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising generating the second signal B when any shopping cart is returned to a collection point.

3. (currently amended) A ~~process~~ method according to claim 2, further comprising

only generating the second signal B when the returned shopping cart had previously been located outside of the collection point for longer than a preset time period.

4. (currently amended) A ~~process~~ method according to claim 2, further comprising
only generating the second signal B when the shopping cart had been previously used to go shopping.

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)

7. (currently amended) A method according to claim [[6]] 1, wherein
the customer is re-recognized to generate signal B using an optical recognition system.

8 - 9 (cancelled)

10. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein
the signals A and B are saved on a customer-owned data medium.

11. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein
the signals A and B are linked in the customer-owned data medium.

12. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein each of the signals A

and B are stored together with a time stamp on the customer-owned data medium, they are read out when the next purchase is made and are correlated to issue of a bonus at the shopping center.

13 – 15 (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A system for detecting and rewarding the returning of shopping carts to a collection point, comprising a first detection means (5) to generate a first signal A during ~~the~~ a purchase and a second detection means (7) to generate a second signal B when a shopping cart (1) is returned to a collection point (6), and a data processing unit to correlate the two signals A and B to issue a bonus,

Pl
cont.
the first detection means (5) is for identifying or individualizing a particular customer by optical recognition ~~or an information medium carried by him~~ when generating the first signal A.

17 – 19 (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) A system according to claim 16, wherein the information medium is a data medium in the permanent possession of the customer.

21. (previously presented) A system according to claim 16, wherein

the information medium is a customer-owned mobile telecommunication means, in particular a mobile phone (13).

22. (previously presented) A system according to claim 16, wherein the second detection means (18) further includes means for recognizing whether the returned shopping cart (1) has been stored into the shopping cart stacked row provided at the collection point (6) within a prescribed tolerance.

23. (currently amended) A system according to claim ~~[[17]]~~ 16, wherein the first detection means (5) includes an optical signal transmitter (15) located in the shopping center and the second detection means includes a second optical signal transmitter (18) at the collection point (6), and a number of optical detectors (17) that cooperate with the first and the second signal transmitters (15, 18), said detectors being attached to the shopping carts (1) and being provided for the generation of signals A and B. ~~as well as for forwarding the signals A and B to the customer-owned information medium.~~

B1
cont.

24. (original) A system according to claim 23, wherein the optical detectors (17) are provided with a read-write device (24) to write the customer-owned data medium which comprises a chip card (25).

25. (original) A system according to claim 23, wherein

a wireless forwarding of signals A and B to the customer-owned data medium is provided.

26. (previously presented) A system according to claim 23, wherein at least one of the first and/the second optical signal transmitter (15, 18) are made up of IR light sources.

P1
COND.
27. (previously presented) A system according to claim 23, wherein the first optical signal transmitter (15) comprises a light signal (16) that is modulated according to normal lighting of the shopping center.

28. (previously presented) A system according to claim 23, wherein the second optical signal transmitter (18) comprises of a light signal (19) that is modulated according to the normal lighting of the collection point (6).
